

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT C.L. SULZBERGER COLUMN OP-ED PAGE
NEW YORK TIMES, AUGUST 11, HEADED "THE U.S. MUST FISH OR
CUT BAIT."

2. ATHENS -- THE CURRENT GREEK-TURKISH CRISIS OVER RIGHTS
TO EXPLORE THE EASTERN AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF IS THE MOST
HEATED AND DANGEROUS SINCE TURKEY INVADED CYPRUS TWO YEARS
AGO.

3. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR FOREIGNERS TO COMPREHEND THE DIS-
PUTE WHICH INVOLVES DEFINING LIMITS OF TERRITORIAL AND
INTERNATIONAL WATERS AND THE RELATIVE SHALLOWS LYING BE-
NEATH THEM. YET EXPERTS FROM MANY LANDS HAVE STILL TO
AGREE ON THIS PROBLEM. MEANWHILE, ATHENS ARGUES THAT THE
1958 GENEVA CONVENTION IS THE ONLY EXISTING ACCORD DEALING
WITH IT.

4. GREECE SIGNED THIS; TURKEY DID NOT. BUT, IN AN EFFORT
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TO EASE ARGUMENTS BETWEEN THESE HIGHLY EMOTIONAL NEIGHBORS

-- NOWADAYS ONLY THEORETICALLY ALLIED IN NATO -- ATHENS
AND ANKARA AGREED TO SUBMIT THE DISPUTE JOINTLY TO THE

HAGUE WORLD COURT. THE TURKS SUBSEQUENTLY CHANGED THEIR
MINDS, HOWEVER. THEY ALSO IGNORED A GREEK OFFER OF A NON-
AGGRESSION PACT AND BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS ON A LIST OF
DISCORDS.

5. NOW THAT PRIME MINISTER CONSTANTINE CARAMANLIS'S
GOVERNMENT HAS DECIDED TO TAKE THE MOST INFLAMMATORY CUR-
RENT SUBJECT -- OIL EXPLORATION BY THE TURKISH VESSEL
SISMIK I (HORA) WITH INTERMITTENT NAVAL AND AIR ESCORTS --
UNILATERALLY TO THE HAGUE AND TO REQUEST A SECURITY COUNCI
MEETING ON THREATS TO THE PEACE, THE UNITED STATES MUST
DIPLOMATICALLY FISH OR CUT BAIT. EFFORTS TO REMAIN IM-
PARTIAL IN THE GRECO-TURKISH DISPUTE HAVE PRODUCED NOTHING
BUT UNPOPULARITY FOR WASHINGTON IN BOTH COUNTRIES. THE
ISSUES POSED TODAY ARE INESCAPABLE.

6. UNTIL THERE IS EITHER BILATERAL COMPROMISE ON WHAT THE
AEGEAN CONTINENTAL SHELF COMPRISES OR INTERNATIONAL
ACCORDS DEFINE THIS, IT IS NEEDLESS AND CLEARLY PROVOCA-
TIVE FOR TURKEY TO LAUNCH AN EXPLORATORY MISSION IN WHAT
EVEN ANKARA ADMITS ARE "DISPUTED" WATERS. THE 1958 CON-
VENTION ACTUALLY AWARDED THEIR SUBSURFACE RIGHTS TO GREECE
BUT ATHENS IS PREPARED TO DISCUSS OR ARBITRATE THE ISSUE.
CERTAINLY THERE IS NO COMPULSIVE REASON FOR ANKARA TO STIR
UP DELIBERATE TROUBLE AT THIS MOMENT, ALERTING ITS ARMED
FORCES TO "PROTECT" THE SISMIK.

7. ONE IMMEDIATE RESULT HAS BEEN TO FORCE WASHINGTON TO
FACE THE PROBLEM HEAD-ON IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL AND CEASE
ITS SHILLY-SHALLYING APPROACH. IT MUST SUPPORT THE ESSENC
OF GREECE'S POSITION -- CESSATION OF INFLAMMATORY ACTS --
WHEN THE SECURITY COUNCIL MEETS.

8. THERE IS NO NEED TO HUMILIATE TURKEY BUT THE GREEK
ATTITUDE HAS BEEN TEMPERATE AND LEGALLY SOUND. MOREOVER
THE CRISIS STEMS FROM AN UNNECESSARY TURKISH MOVE THAT
SEEMS AIMED MORE AT COURTING CHAUVINISTIC POPULARITY IN
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NEXT YEAR'S NATIONAL ELECTIONS THAN AT SUDDENLY FINDING
OIL.

9. IF THE UNITED STATES DOESN'T BASICALLY ASSESS THE
SITUATION ACCORDINGLY IN THE UNITED NATIONS, EVEN WHILE
TRYING TO ENCOURAGE FRIENDLY MEDIATION EFFORTS (PREFERABLY
THROUGH OTHER LESS UNPOPULAR NATO CAPITALS), A NEW WAVE OF
ANTI-AMERICANISM IS INEVITABLE HERE. ALREADY MR. CARA-

MANLIS IS BEING HAMMERED BY HIS OPPOSITION FOR NOT SINKING THE SISMIK, QUITTING NATO ENTIRELY AND HALTING BASE NEGOTIATIONS WITH WASHINGTON.

10. HE TOLD ME: "THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF THE GREEK PEOPLE STRONGLY FAVORS GOOD RELATIONS AND FRIENDSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES." NEVERTHELESS, ANTI-UNITED STATES MANIFESTATIONS STEM FROM THE BELIEF THAT WASHINGTON DOESN'T STAND UP FOR ATHENS AT CRITICAL MOMENTS. THIS CONVICTION IS FANNED BY OPPOSITION DEMAGOGUES. THE MAIN "CRITICAL MOMENTS," IN THE POPULAR MIND, REFER TO LACK OF AMERICAN INTERVENTION AGAINST THE COLONELS OR AGAINST THE TURKISH LANDINGS IN CYPRUS.

11. MR. CARAMANLIS HAS OFTEN TOLD WASHINGTON IT COULD END SUCH SLANDER BY PUBLICLY CONFIRMING THAT AMERICA WAS THE ONLY ALLY WHICH CUT GREEK AID AFTER THE JUNTA TOOK OVER AND THAT WASHINGTON ALSO GOT ADVANCE INTIMATIONS OF THE COLONELS' COUP IN CYPRUS (WHICH PRECIPITATED TURKEY'S INVASION) AND WARNED THEM WHILE ALERTING PRESIDENT MAKARIOS. BUT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAS REPLIED BY DEEP SILENCE. IS IT STUPID -- OR EMBARRASSED?

12. ALL THIS DANGEROUS HULLABALOO COMES AT AN ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE MOMENT. U.S.-GREEK NEGOTIATIONS ON FOUR KEY MILITARY BASES HERE, AVAILABLE TO AMERICAN NATO FORCES, ARE VIRTUALLY READY FOR SIGNATURE. GREECE HAD WITHDRAWN FROM NATO'S COMMAND STRUCTURE BECAUSE IT FELT IT RECEIVED NO BACKING IN ITS QUARREL WITH TURKEY.

13. HOWEVER, THIS MOVE IS NOT CONSIDERED IRREVOCABLE BY MR. CARAMANLIS. HE TOLD ME: "WE ARE NOT AGAINST NATO. WE WERE SIMPLY FORCED TO WITHDRAW FROM ITS MILITARY COM-
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MANDS." THERE IS EVERY INDICATION THAT -- IF THE AEGEAN BOMB CAN BE DEFUSED -- GREECE IS PREPARED TO RE-EXAMINE ALLIED RELATIONSHIPS AND SIGN A NEW UNITED STATES BASE ACCORD.

14. BUT IF NO SUPPORT IS FORTHCOMING IN THE U.N. DEBATE, AMERICA CAN KISS GOODBYE TO ALL THAT. IS IT TOO MUCH TO ASK THE TURKS TO POSTPONE A POSSIBLY BARREN EXPLORATION, WHICH LOOKS LIKE AN EXERCISE IN FLAG-WAVING, UNTIL EITHER ARBITRATION, ADJUDICATION OR NEGOTIATION HAS ARRANGED A FORMULA BASED ON COMMON SENSE AND THE CONVENIENCE OF WESTERN DEMOCRATIC INTERESTS? END TEXT. ROBINSON

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